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VATICAN - AVE MARIA - "A Heart in Love with God's Will"
Rev. Luciano Alimandi

Vatican City (Fides Service) - "Not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22, 42)! At the hour of his agony in the Garden of Olives, Jesus repeats words which had nourished him all through his life here on earth, precisely doing not his own will, but that of the Father. In the battle with the infernal spirit in the desert, after forty days of fasting, Christ defeats Satan using as his shield God's will. In fact the Tempter lures him with a will which was not that of the Father, but Jesus unmasks him.

In our life as Christians, we too are tempted and tried on the same point: to do or not to do the will of God. Every time we follow our own tastes we inexorably fall into the enemy's trap, whereas when we follow the will of God those chains are broken and we are free to exercise our freedom to be one with the greatest of freedoms, God's own freedom.

God created us as free persons precisely that we might do His will; if we were not free we could not freely choose to do the will of God. Freedom - someone once wrote - is both strength and weakness. It all depends on how it is used: it is strength when oriented towards Jesus to imitate Him, to do His will; it is weakness when turned towards ourselves, our whims, instincts, ambitions … we may convince ourselves we are doing God's will when we do great things for others, or dream of doing them; but the glare of these great things could hide the little things God asks of us and which we want to avoid because they are humiliating. Only the will of God and not our own works however praiseworthy, makes us holy. Our sanctification depends solely on how we join our will to the will of God, day by day, moment by moment, as we are taught by the Saints.

The Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI in a recent meeting with seminarians at Rome's Major Seminary answered a question from one of the students regarding the temptation of careerism, and gave this beautiful example: "Here a little story springs to my mind about Saint Bakhita, the beautiful African Saint who was a slave in Sudan and then discovered the faith in Italy, who became a Sister. When she was old, the Bishop who was paying a visit to her religious house had not met her. He spotted this small, bent African Sister and said to Bakhita: "But what do you do, Sister?"; and Saint Bakhita replied: "I do the same as you, Your Excellency". Astonished, the Bishop asked her: "But what?", and Bakhita answered, "But Your Excellency, we both want to do the same thing: God's will". This seems to me to be a most beautiful answer, the Bishop and the tiny Sister who was almost no longer capable of working, who were both doing the same thing in their different offices; they were seeking to do God's will and so were in the right place." (Benedict XVI, Visit to the community of the Roman Major Seminary, on Occasion of the Feast of Our Lady of Trust 17 February 2007).

Sad to say the Devil often succeeds in distracting us from the only thing which counts : "Mary has chosen the better part which will not be taken from her" (Lk 10, 42). This better part is precisely the will of God, which cannot be defeated or annulled by any other will! What God wills will come about also in us if we are willing. Willing His will, this was the secret of Our Lady; Mary, more than any other saint impressed the Word, the Will of God on her heart.

Mary repeated incessantly with her Son: "Behold I come to do your will" (Heb 10, 7) and she teaches us to do the same especially at times of temptation. The handmaid of the Lord knows well that human will cannot make holy, only God's will lifts us above ourselves towards heaven, and the Paradise of God's will. When we pray the Our Father prayer and we ask "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven", we are not asking from something utopian, something impossible, we are making the most decisive, powerful and truest statement of our lives. What benefit would it be to earn the esteem of the world while failing to esteem the will of God! Discernment, spiritual direction, prayer, the apostolate … everything has meaning only if it tends towards the will of God, otherwise we lose ourselves in the labyrinth of human will, so weak, fragile and inconclusive. The only thing that mattered to Our Lady at the Annunciation was to know God's will. When the Angel explained she believed and entrusted

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herself entirely to the will of the Almighty One. In this season of Lent, let us pray to Our Lady and the holy angels that we may deepen our desire to do the will of God “solo in sua voluntate è nostra pace” (Dante). “Only His will is our peace”. (Agenzia Fides 28/2/2007 - Righe 53, parole 831)

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